



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 8, 2008

Dear Colleague,

This week the Ways and Means Committee kicked off the Speaker's announced immigration reform hearing series with a hearing on employment verification proposals and their impact on the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ability to serve the public. Much of the Subcommittee's attention focused on the New Employee Verification Act and its innovative, bipartisan approach to the critical challenge of employment verification. As discussed at yesterday's hearing, the New Employee Verification Act (H.R. 5515) or NEVA will:

***Ensure a Legal Workforce***

- Provide a superior, user-friendly employment verification system by replacing the current paper-based, error-prone, I-9 work status verification process with a paperless, reliable electronic employment verification system.
- Allow employers to transmit system data through their state's new hire reporting process, a process already used by 90 percent of employers to help track down dead beat dads.
- Confirm work authorization for U.S. citizens through the SSA and for non-citizens through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
- Require the SSA and the DHS to certify the accuracy of their databases in advance of full implementation and annually thereafter. NEVA also requires the Government Accountability Office to evaluate system accuracy, efficiency, privacy, security and impact.
- Strengthen enforcement through enhanced employer penalties.

***Safeguard Workers' Identities***

- Create an alternate, voluntary secure electronic employment verification system to verify an employee's identity and work eligibility and to "lock" that identity once verified.
- Establish a network of private sector government-certified experts to authenticate new employees' identities utilizing existing background check and document screening tools.
- Ensure each employee's identity is safeguarded through the use of a biometric identifier (such as a thumbprint) which the employees would then present to their employers to confirm their identity and work authorization.

***Protect Social Security's Primary Mission***

- Prevent the SSA from implementing employment verification unless funds are appropriated in advance.
- Prevent wages earned through future unauthorized work from being used to determine benefits.

Due to its strong protections for both employers and employees, NEVA has received the support of many within the business community, including the National Federation of Independent Business, the National Association of Homebuilders and the H.R. Initiative for a Legal Workforce, a coalition of human resource organizations and business groups, representing thousands of small and large U.S. employers from a broad range of sectors.

For several years, Congress has considered various ways to reform our broken immigration system and has come up short. This year we must enact real solutions and NEVA offers the right approach to ensure a legal U.S. workforce. Information about NEVA may be found at: <http://republicans.waysandmeans.house.gov/showarticle.asp?ID=330>

If you have any further questions or would like to cosponsor the bill, please contact Kathleen Black (Johnson personal office) at 5-4201 or Caryn B. Schenewerk at 5-2542 (Giffords personal office). Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s Sam Johnson

/s Gabrielle Giffords

/s Ron Lewis

/s Dennis Moore

/s Kevin Brady

/s Harry Mitchell

/s Paul Ryan